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applicable national average payment rate of reimbursement for each category (free, reduced-price, paid) by the claiming percentage for that category.

(c) States have two methods of reimbursing institutions. The method chosen by the State agency must be applied to all institutions participating in the Program in that State. These methods are:

(1) Meals times rates payment, which involves reimbursing an institution for meals served at the assigned rate for each meal. This method entails no comparison to the costs incurred by the institution for the meal service; and,

(2) Meals times rates or actual costs, whichever is the lesser, which involves reimbursing an institution for meals served at the assigned rate for each meal or at the level of the costs actually incurred by the institution for the meal service. This method does entail a comparison of the costs incurred to the meal rates, with the costs being a limiting factor on the level of reimbursement an institution may receive.

(d) In those States where the State agency has chosen the option to implement a meals times rates payment system State-wide, the State agency may elect to pay an institution's final claim for reimbursement for the fiscal year at higher reassigned rates of reimbursement for lunches and suppers; however, the reassigned rates may not exceed the applicable maximum rates of reimbursement established under § 210.11(b) of the National School Lunch Program regulations. In those States which use the method of comparing meals times rates or actual costs, whichever is lesser, the total payments made to an institution shall not exceed the total net costs incurred for the fiscal year.

[47 FR 36527, Aug. 20, 1982, as amended at 48 FR 21530, May 13, 1983; 53 FR 52590, Dec. 28, 1988; Amdt. 22, 55 FR 1378, Jan. 14, 1990; 71 FR 5, Jan. 3, 2006; 72 FR 41607, July 31, 2007; 75 FR 16327, Apr. 1, 2010]

§ 226.10 Program payment procedures.

(a) If a State agency elects to issue advance payments to all or some of the participating institutions in the State, it must provide such advances no later than the first day of each month to

those eligible institutions electing to receive advances in accordance with § 226.6 (f)(3)(iv)(F). Advance payments shall equal the full level of claims estimated by the State agency to be submitted in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, considering prior reimbursement claims and other information such as fluctuations in enrollment. The institution may decline to receive all or any part of the advance.

(b) For each fiscal year, the amount of payment made, including funds advanced to an institution, shall not exceed the amount of valid reimbursement claimed by that institution. To ensure that institutions do not receive excessive advance payments, the State agency shall observe the following procedures:

(1) After three advance payments have been made to an institution, the State agency shall ensure that no subsequent advance is made until the State agency has validated the institution's claim for reimbursement for the third month prior to the month for which the next advance is to be paid.

(2) If the State agency has audit or monitoring evidence of extensive program deficiencies or other reasons to believe that an institution will not be able to submit a valid claim for reimbursement, advance payments shall be withheld until the claim is received or the deficiencies are corrected.

(3) Each month the State agency shall compare incoming claims against advances to ensure that the level of funds authorized under paragraph (a) of this section does not exceed the claims for reimbursement received from the institution. Whenever this process indicates that excessive advances have been authorized, the State agency shall either demand full repayment or adjust subsequent payments, including advances.

(4) If, as a result of year end reconciliation as required by 7 CFR part 3016 or 7 CFR part 3019, as applicable, the State agency determines that reimbursement earned by an institution during a fiscal year is less than the amount paid, including funds advanced to that institution, the State agency shall demand repayment of the outstanding balance or adjust subsequent payments.

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(c) Claims for Reimbursement shall report information in accordance with the financial management system established by the State agency, and in sufficient detail to justify the reimbursement claimed and to enable the State agency to provide the final Report of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (FNS 44) required under § 226.7(d). In submitting a Claim for Reimbursement, each institution shall certify that the claim is correct and that records are available to support that claim. For each month in which independent for-profit child care centers and independent for-profit outside-school-hours care centers claim reimbursement, they must submit the number and percentage of children in care (enrolled or licensed capacity, whichever is less) that documents at least 25 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or are title XX beneficiaries. However, children who only receive at-risk afterschool snacks and/or at-risk afterschool meals must not be considered in determining this eligibility. Sponsoring organizations of for-profit child care centers or for-profit outside-school-hours care centers must submit the number and percentage of children in care (enrolled or licensed capacity, whichever is less) that documents that at least 25 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or are title XX beneficiaries. Sponsoring organizations of such centers must not submit a claim for any for-profit center in which less than 25 percent of the children in care (enrolled or licensed capacity, whichever is less) during the claim month were eligible for free or reduced-price meals or were title XX beneficiaries. Independent for-profit adult day care centers shall submit the percentages of enrolled adult participants receiving title XIX or title XX benefits for the month claimed for months in which not less than 25 percent of enrolled adult participants were title XIX or title XX beneficiaries. Sponsoring organizations of such adult day care centers shall submit the percentage of enrolled adult participants receiving title XIX or title XX benefits for each center for the claim. Sponsoring organizations of such centers shall not submit claims for adult day care centers in which less than 25 per-

cent of enrolled adult participants were title XIX or title XX beneficiaries for the month claimed. Prior to submitting its consolidated monthly claim to the State agency, each sponsoring organization must perform edit checks on each facility's meal claim. At a minimum, the sponsoring organization's edit checks must:

(1) Verify that each facility has been approved to serve the types of meals claimed; and

(2) Compare the number of children enrolled for care at each facility, multiplied by the number of days on which the facility is approved to serve meals, to the total number of meals claimed by the facility for that month. Discrepancies between the facility's meal claim and its enrollment must be subjected to more thorough review to determine if the claim is accurate.

(d) All records to support the claim shall be retained for a period of three years after the date of submission of the final claim for the fiscal year to which they pertain, except that if audit findings have not been resolved, the records shall be retained beyond the end of the three year period as long as may be required for the resolution of the issues raised by the audit. All accounts and records pertaining to the Program shall be made available, upon request, to representatives of the State agency, of the Department, and of the U.S. Government Accountability Office for audit or review, at a reasonable time and place.

(e) Unless otherwise approved by FNS, the Claim for Reimbursement for any month shall cover only Program operations for that month except if the first or last month of Program operations in any fiscal year contains 10 operating days or less, such month may be added to the Claim for Reimbursement for the appropriate adjacent month; however, Claims for Reimbursement may not combine operations occurring in two fiscal years. A final Claim for Reimbursement shall be postmarked and/or submitted to the State agency not later than 60 days following the last day of the full month covered by the claim. State agencies may establish shorter deadlines at their discretion. Claims not postmarked and/or submitted within 60

days shall not be paid with Program funds unless FNS determines that an exception should be granted. The State agency shall promptly take corrective action with respect to any Claim for Reimbursement as determined necessary through its claim review process or otherwise. In taking such corrective action, State agencies may make upward adjustments in Program funds claimed on claims filed within the 60 day deadline if such adjustments are completed within 90 days of the last day of the claim month and are reflected in the final Report of the Child and Adult Care Food Programs (FNS-44) for the claim month which is required under 226.7(d). Upward adjustments in Program funds claimed which are not reflected in the final FNS-44 for the claim month shall not be made unless authorized by FNS. Downward adjustments in Program funds claimed shall always be made without FNS authorization regardless of when it is determined that such adjustments are necessary.

(f) If, based on the results of audits, investigations, or other reviews, a State agency has reason to believe that an institution, child or adult care facility, or food service management company has engaged in unlawful acts with respect to Program operations, the evidence found in audits, investigations, or other reviews is a basis for non-payment of claims for reimbursement.

[47 FR 36527, Aug. 20, 1982, as amended by Amdt. 5, 49 FR 18988, May 4, 1984; 50 FR 26975, July 1, 1985; 53 FR 52590, Dec. 28, 1988; Amdt. 22, 55 FR 1378, Jan. 14, 1990; 62 FR 23618, May 1, 1997; 69 FR 53543, Sept. 1, 2004; 70 FR 43261, July 27, 2005; 71 FR 39519, July 13, 2006; 72 FR 41607, July 31, 2007; 75 FR 16327, Apr. 1, 2010; 76 FR 22798, Apr. 25, 2011; 76 FR 34571, June 13, 2011]

§ 226.11 Program payments for centers.

(a) *Requirement for agreements.* Payments must be made only to institutions operating under an agreement with the State agency for the meal types specified in the agreement served at approved child care centers, at-risk afterschool care centers, adult day care centers, emergency shelters, and outside-school-hours care centers. A State agency may develop a policy under which centers are reimbursed for meals

served in accordance with provisions of the Program in the calendar month preceding the calendar month in which the agreement is executed, or the State agency may develop a policy under which centers receive reimbursement only for meals served in approved centers on and after the effective date of the Program agreement. If the State agency's policy permits centers to earn reimbursement for meals served prior to the execution of a Program agreement, program reimbursement must not be received by the center until the agreement is executed.

(b) *Institutions—(1) Edit checks of sponsored centers.* Prior to submitting its consolidated monthly claim to the State agency, each sponsoring organization must conduct reasonable edit checks on the sponsored centers' meal claims, which at a minimum, must include those edit checks specified at § 226.10(c).

(2) *Child and adult care institutions.* Each child care institution and each adult day care institution must report each month to the State agency the total number of Program meals, by type (breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks), served to children or adult participants, respectively, except as provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(3) *For-profit center exception.* For-profit child care centers, including for-profit at-risk afterschool care centers and outside-school-hours care centers, must provide the reports required in paragraph (b)(2) of this section only for calendar months during which at least 25 percent of the children in care (enrolled or licensed capacity, whichever is less) were eligible for free or reduced-price meals or were title XX beneficiaries. However, children who only receive at-risk afterschool snacks and/or at-risk afterschool meals must not be considered in determining this eligibility. For-profit adult day care centers must provide the reports required in paragraph (b)(2) of this section only for calendar months during which at least 25 percent of enrolled adult participants were beneficiaries of title XIX, title XX, or a combination of titles XIX and XX.

(c) *Reimbursement—(1) Child and adult care institutions.* Each State agency